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7-1-1995

Remarks

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Recommended Citation

Dante B. Fascell, *Remarks*, 26 U. Miami Inter-Am. L. Rev. 435 (1995)
Available at: <http://repository.law.miami.edu/umialr/vol26/iss3/2>

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1995 LAWYER OF THE AMERICAS AWARD

REMARKS

We are sitting on the edge of a volcano in the Caribbean and Latin America, and it can erupt in our faces if we do not carefully and in a direct manner better understand our neighbors, and continue working for the improvement of our relationships. We must try diligently to remove the sting and stain of years of mistrust, misunderstanding and down right hostility.

This was the tenor of my remarks delivered immediately after my election to Congress in 1954. My focus was not accidental. I believe today, in 1995, forty-one years later, that even with some considerable progress and improved understanding that the needs which gave rise to the warning in 1954 still exist, and current dangers are just as bothersome and dangerous.

The bases for cooperation are too obvious to dwell on — geographical, interlocking trade and economics, heritage, migration, and communications capability. In fact, in almost every human endeavor whether it is education, environment, medicine, the legal system, human rights, drugs, crime and corruption, political systems, or whatever, it does not take an in-depth analysis to reach the conclusion that we all had better work very hard in the Western Hemisphere to aid not only the people in our respective countries, but in the other countries as well.

Political and economic stability are a necessity to foster an improved quality of life. One of the main difficulties is that a very large percentage of the people of many, if not most, countries are outside the economic and political mainstream of their

country. There is not just a lack of participation, but a loss of hope in their future and the quality of life at present. So it is no wonder that there were and are revolutions; reliance on the almost mystical *caudillo*; the remnants of Communism and continuing efforts at almost any different governmental structure, as well as massive migration. Fortunately, democracy has gained a tenuous foothold. Dictatorships, the uniformed savior, communism, revolutions and uprisings are waning despite serious flurries even today which could enlarge and engulf millions of people.

Now that the cold war is over, it is not the global infiltration of Communism that endangers the Western Hemisphere; it is the rising to the forefront of long festering Hemispheric issues. So despite democracy's Hemispheric ascendancy (except for Cuba, of course) there is still this lurking, ever present danger, that there will be a major blow-up over one or more of the other myriad of issues.

Admittedly the U.S. has concerns in other places — Europe, Africa, Asia, the Newly Independent States. Also in continuing issues, such as nuclear, chemical and biological proliferation, human rights violations, crime and corruption, regional disputes and many others.

But the U.S. cannot ignore and has not ignored its interest in the Western Hemisphere countries. It's just that some people believe and feel that the priority for the attention of international and regional organizations, both financial and political, and the U.S., lies in other regions of the world. Even if that is not true, the perception still exists in the minds of many people in the Caribbean and Latin America.

President Clinton understood all of this and hence the hard work with the GATT and NAFTA, the trade arrangement with Canada, Mexico and the U.S., and holding the Hemispheric Summit here in Miami. The declarations and their implementations are equally as vital. Coming together, addressing particular and mutual problems, the Post-Summit implementation process signals a bolder, more determined effort by President Clinton and the U.S. to come to grips with and raise the priority of interest and concern of matters relating to this Hemisphere.

The U.S. must do its best to assist in this struggle, to keep democracy moving and gaining confidence, and to minimize the

dangers to our own society.

Of course, the U.S. can't do this alone. We have problems in our own society which make many U.S. citizens feel that the U.S. should have few, if any, regional or global interests. Rather than withdrawing from the world, eliminating or weakening all regional and international institutions, the U.S. needs to continue what President Clinton and other Presidents — both Republican and Democratic — have done, and that is to aggressively press the case for all countries to participate in regional and global matters in their own self-interest as well as for the fostering of democracy and its attendant benefits of individual rights, freedoms and responsibilities; the opening up of world markets, free trade, adoption of common principles; the peaceful resolution of disputes and other benefits.

There is so much to be done. The challenge will test the courage, creativity and intelligence of all Americans, North and South.

Fifty years from now some historian must be able to say, in the *University of Miami Inter-American Law Review* and other important publications, that when a new day was in the offing in the Western Hemisphere, the U.S. and its friends and neighbors strode confidently forward — to meet the challenge and with sleeves rolled up, prepared to foster powerful and important changes in our societies — and that we were successful.

I believe the U.S. and its friends can do this. Indeed, in order to have a decent future in the U.S. as well as the entire Western Hemisphere — we must.

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